

Tehama – Glenn Unit
Fire Management Plan
2005

I. Executive Summary



The Tehama-Glenn Unit (TGU) Fire Management Plan documents the current and historical assessments of the fire situation within the Unit's area of responsibility, and efforts taken to protect it. The document identifies strategic areas for pre-fire planning and fuels treatment as defined by the people who live and work with the local fire issues. The plan includes stakeholder contributions and priorities. This plan has been adapted from the original Tehama-Glenn Unit Fire Management Plan 2000, and subsequent versions.

A. Goals and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to reduce the destruction and associated costs from wildfire by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management prescriptions, improved initial attack success, stakeholders cooperation, public education, preparation of fuels, evaluation and validation of data provided from historical and current fire information, and weather factors. The document is intended to provide a foundation from which communities can assume a cooperative role in the effort to improve fire and life safety. The content of this report is cooperative effort between the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Tehama Fire-Safe Council.

This plan utilizes five strategic objectives to construct the Fire Plan Framework as identified in the California Fire Plan, and incorporates them into the planning and implementation process. The five objectives and framework components of the Tehama-Glenn Fire Management Plan are as follows:

- Wildfire Protection Zones – To create wildfire protection zones by identifying unique objectives that are specific to the landscapes and land uses found there, in order to reduce the risks to citizens and firefighters.
- Initial Attack Success – Assess the initial attack fire suppression successes of wildland fires on lands of similar vegetation type. This is measured in terms of a percentage of fires that are successfully controlled before unacceptable costs and losses occur. The analysis can be used to determine the Department and Unit's level of service.

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- Assets Protected – The plan utilizes a methodology for defining assets protected and their degree of risk from wildfire. The assets at risk addressed in the plan are life safety (citizen and firefighter), watersheds and water quality, timber, wildlife and wildlife habitat (including rare and endangered species), rural communities, unique areas (scenic, cultural, and historic), recreation, range, property in the form of structures, and air quality. Stakeholders for each of the assets at risk are identified; their input helps to guide the pre-fire decision-making process of CDF and other fire service managers as well as that of the local Fire Safe Councils.
- Fire Management Prescriptions – Fire management prescriptions focus on alternative means of protecting assets at risk. Projects include a combination of fuel modification, ignition management, fire-wise planning and education, and pre-development planning. Specific activities include but are not limited to land-use planning and associated regulation, educational programs and public information, department infrastructure including fire stations and water systems, fuels management and forest health. Pre-fire management prescriptions will also identify those who will benefit from such work and consequently those who should share in the project costs.
- Fiscal Framework – The State Board of Forestry and CDF has addressed the fiscal framework for assessing and monitoring annual and long-term changes in California's wildland fire protection systems through the Fire Safe Councils and the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) grants.

B. Fire Plan Framework

Applications of the Fire Plan Framework:

- Identify areas of concentrated assets and high risk for state, federal and local officials as well as the public.
- To provide citizens with the necessary information, which will enable them to identify public and private assets, design solutions, and carry out pre-fire projects designed to protect those assets.
- Allow stakeholders, agency personnel, the private sector and the public, to come together in a common form through the Fire Safe Councils with the focus of reducing the threat and impact of wildfire. Through the cooperative efforts of the Fire Safe Councils and CDF identify and prioritize pre-fire projects in order to allocate available resources in the most cost effective manner.

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- Encourage an intergovernmental approach to reducing costs and losses as the result of wildland fire.
- Enable policy makers and the public to focus realistically on what can and should be done to reduce future costs plus losses from wildland fire.
- Through the land use and safety element of the Tehama and Glenn County general plans, incorporate elements of the California Fire Plan so that the county plan supports the state plan.
- Allow the Tehama-Glenn Unit to improve the efficiency of its fire protection system, by developing pointed solutions for identified deficiencies.

The computer based data and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are utilized, which allows for a comprehensive analysis of fire hazards (fuels and severe fire weather), assets at risk, and level of service to be included in the Fire Management Plan. In short, the Tehama-Glenn Unit Fire Management Plan systematically assess the existing level of wildland fire protection service, identifies high-risk and high-value areas where potential exists for costly and damaging wildfires, ranks these areas in terms of priority needs, and prescribes what can be done to reduce future costs and losses. The fire plan assessment system has four components. They include:

- Assets at Risk (AAR)
- Level of Service (LOS)
- Hazardous Fuels
- Historic Fire Weather

The intent of the Tehama-Glenn Unit Fire Management Plan is to document the findings of the fire plan assessment process; assist stakeholders with the pre-fire management decision-making, and communicate the fire problem and subsequent solutions to stakeholders and citizens. The 2000 Fire Management Plan looked at 10 years of data (1990 – 1999). Subsequent versions of the plan incorporate fire plan assessments built on the previous ten-year's data. This Fire Management Plan will also be used to coordinate pre-fire activities with adjacent CDF Units, national forests and large private landowners. This plan provides the foundation for funding requests, which can be presented to federal, state and local agencies, public and private organizations, and the general public.

Tehama-Glenn Unit Fire Management Plan is currently in the process of meeting the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) minimum requirements of 1)
Collaboration: A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state

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government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties; 2) **Prioritized Fuel Reduction**: A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and 3) **Treatment of Structural Ignitability**: A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan. Upon acceptance by the Tehama County Board of Supervisors, this plan shall meet CWPP compliance. More information regarding the Community Wildfire Protection Plan can be found at <http://www.cafirealliance.org/cwpp.php>.

C. Unit Overview

The Tehama-Glenn Unit lies within the northern end of the Sacramento Valley. The Unit is made up of four field Battalions: Battalion 1 (East), Battalion 2 (Valley), Battalion 3 (West), and Battalion 4 (South). Each of these Battalions consists of a distinct mix of geography, fuels, access issues, assets at risk, and fire causes.

Battalion 1 (East) lies in the northeast corner of Tehama County. The Battalion runs from the eastern foothills on the east side of the Sacramento Valley to the Lassen National Forest boundary on the east, and from the Butte County line in the south to the Shasta County line in the north.

Topography within Battalion 1 includes rolling foothills in the west to mountain terrain in the East, with predominate volcanic influence in geography. This area includes several major drainages, which run generally east to west, such as Deer Creek, Antelope Creek, Mill Creek, and Battle Creek. These drainages form steep canyons, which present substantial access problems and promote rapid fire spread.

Fuels within Battalion 1 consist of grass and oak-woodlands in the lower foothills with increasing brush, pine, and mixed conifer forests as the foothills rise to mountains in the east. These grass fuels in the foothills and canyons have historically carried fast spreading, wind driven, high intensity fires with a moderate to high resistance to control, due to access problems.

Fires, such as the Manton Fire of 1998, occurring in the grass, oak-woodland, brush mix, or the Gun Fires in 1999, which burned in timber, oak-woodland, and grass present the greatest resistance to control and, when they occur, account for the greatest damage to natural resources and structures. Lightning strikes, such as those that occurred in 1999, often cause multiple fires and are difficult to access in a timely fashion. These fires account for many of the Unit fires that exceed 200 acres in size.

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Assets at risk within Battalion 1 include extensive timber, rangelands, watershed, associated fisheries, and several rural communities including hundreds of isolated structures. The communities of Paynes Creek, Manton, Ponderosa Sky Ranch, and Mineral have historically suffered damage to homes and property during periodic fires in these areas. Larger fires (Campbell, Gun II, Barkley, and Finley) within the Battalion have caused widespread damage to range lands and fisheries and cost millions of dollars to suppress.

Battalion 2 (Valley) lies primarily within the Sacramento Valley and covers a large area of Local Responsibility Area (LRA). The Battalion generally covers the approaches to the eastern foothills, Vina Plains area, Los Molinos, City of Tehama, Dairyville, El Camino, Proberta, Antelope, and Bend communities.

The Sacramento River and the valley floor dominate topography within the Battalion. Along the eastern edge of the Battalion, the topography rises into the foothills, towards Battalion 1 with restricted access due to volcanic rock. North of Red Bluff, the Battalion covers the rolling hills of the Bend area with some areas of difficult accessibility due to gullies and draws.

The fuels of Battalion 2 consist of annual grasses, which dominate the valley floor, and oak-woodland with isolated patches of brush in the foothills and Bend area. These fuels carry rapidly spreading, wind-driven fires with low to moderate resistance to control once attacked.

Assets at risk include the greatest concentration of residential, commercial, and industrial structures in Tehama County. Intermixed within this development are extensive areas of agricultural improvements such as orchards, cultivated fields, and associated outbuildings. Fast moving wind-driven fires in this area each year do minimal damage to the agricultural products but often threaten or involve the associated residences and outbuildings.

Battalion 3 (West) lies in the northwest portion of Tehama County, and includes the communities of Lake California, Bowman, Dibble Creek, R-Wildhorse Ranch, Ridgeway, and Red Bank. The valley floor forms much of the eastern boundary, with the western and northern boundary formed by the Mendocino National Forest and the Shasta-Trinity National Forest/Shasta County line respectively.

Topography and fuels within the Battalion are consistently rolling hills with grass/oak-woodland fuels, changing to brush and foothill or grey pine further to the west, then into a mixed conifer forest near the Mendocino National Forest Boundary. Access to the Battalion is varied with moderate to good access existing in most of the eastern portion, and moderate to limited access existing in the west due to less development and steeper terrain.

Assets at risk include a large number of residential and associated structures

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on large lot or ranchette settings. Typical fires include moderate to rapid moving grass fires, which quickly threaten structures. Historic records show occasional occurrence of high intensity large fires in the transition area from rolling hills to mountain terrain with heavier fuel loading and limited access. The area is also at risk from 'red flag' wind events.

Battalion 4 (South) includes the LRA area of Tehama County in Richfield and Corning, to the Tehama-Glenn County line on the west side of the Sacramento River, the State Responsibility Area (SRA) west of Interstate 5 to the Mendocino National Forest, south of Elder Creek and south to the Glenn-Colusa County line. This area is similar in topography and fuels to Battalion 3, and shares many of the same types of fires and causes.

Communities within the South Battalion include Richfield, Corning, Rancho Tehama, Paskenta, Elk Creek, Chrome and Grindstone Rancheria. These communities, along with scattered structures and rangeland, form the primary assets at risk. Historically, fires within this Battalion include annual occurrences of rapid-moving grass fires with one or more growing to more than 200 acres in size. Frequent fires along Interstate 5 in southern Tehama County provide a threat to SRA lands.

The Tehama-Glenn Unit Fire Management Plan is the instrument by which pre-fire planning activities are identified, prioritized and implemented through the cooperative efforts of local fire agencies and fire safe councils. Moreover, through the cooperative efforts of local fire agencies, fire safe councils, and county land-use Planners work to identify and effect changes in fire safe regulations has intensified. Pre-development standards, fire safe and evacuation planning, fuel hazard reduction and defensible space standards have manifested this effort. This Plan is an overall effort to reduce the destruction and associated costs from wildfire by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management. It is through grand efforts that Tehama and Glenn County will be protected.

Gary Durden

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Durden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Unit Chief